

JOSÉ VELA TEJADA

Why did Xenophon write a *Symposium*?
Erotica paideia and *logos Sokratikos**

1. Xenophon, Socrates and the *logos Sokratikos*

Xenophon bequeathed a collection of works, with philosophical content, grouped under the title of *Socratica*, whose composing was mainly inspired by the leading role of Socrates, or, actually, by Xenophon's understanding of the Athenian master's ideas. Therefore, the Socrates' lifetime until his condemn, and his intellectual activity – matters that are less focused in his historical works – find a proper narrative vehicle in the *Socratica*, according to Xenophontean tendency to thematic specialization. The topic of this essay is the effect of Socratic spirit¹, also ascertained in the pedagogic aim and in the ultimate search of the individual paradigm of the Xenophon's historical works.

Nevertheless, we should not insist – as in previous analyses – in establishing the epistemological superiority that results from comparison with

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¹ We say *spirit* or *influence* because, although Xenophon informs us of personal relationship with Socrates in *Anabasis* (III, 1, 5), this does not mean that he was member of the closest circle of Socrates' disciples. In relation to that, WATERFIELD 2004, 79, considers Xenophon as a true Socratic for “he followed Socrates' philosophy to the best of his ability”.

Plato². Sometimes it has been suggested that the Xenophontean profile of Socrates has a more accurate historical reliability than the Platonic one; however, we cannot prove any hypothesis neither in the historian nor in the philosopher³. Definitely, it is obvious the difference⁴ in form, content, and intentions of both authors: whereas Plato presents a philosopher who inquires into fundamental moral principles and develops the theory of Ideas, on the other hand Xenophon usually introduces Socrates as citizen who dismisses calumnies, and exemplary pattern of individual ethic values. Actually there are no reasons to ascribe a bigger historical plausibility to one of two; if the figure of Socrates presented by Xenophon cannot be real, the same opinion could be expressed about the character presented by Plato, since he develops an interpretation based on his own philosophy, rather than an historical portrait rested upon truthful dialogues.

As Socrates did not write dialogues, information about his life and thought ground on indirect tradition by his followers; these witnesses are mainly contained in the works of Plato, Xenophon and Aristotle, along with some fragments of Aeschines of Sphettos and references from Aristophanes' *Clouds*. Even acquiring contradictory information, we realize that they do not show genuine facts, to the extent that also the historical aim (according to the strict sense of the term) takes second place. It is very probably that the lack of written legacy entailed the arrival of a literary tradition. By means of a dialogue structure, every author usually gave an interpretation of Socratic

² On this point, BRISSON - DORION 2004, 139-140, remarks: "Quand on passe en revue les principales critiques qui ont été adressées à ces écrits, et qui finalement provoqué leur éclipse pendant presque tout le XX^e siècle, on s'aperçoit qu'elles visent surtout à discréditer le témoignage de Xénophon dans le cadre d'une recherche de solution à la Question socratique. Or, si la Question socratique est un faux problème, sa mise au rancart rend caduques la plupart des critiques adressées aux écrits socratiques de Xénophon".

³ In a concise but very accurate study on Xenophon NICKEL 1979, 109, is right when asserts that the literary character of Socrates' picture and the supremacy of fiction over the historical truth as general features.

⁴ From this point of view, GRAY 1998, 191, offers a new prospect to resolve the dilemma: "Plato was apparently writing in a different tradition that had different limits and tolerances and perhaps different audiences, but this matter has not been fully resolved. Xenophon's image resides then not just within the frame of rhetorical process but within a tradition of thought about wise men recognizable to the audience familiar with wisdom literature".

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thought depending on his own target. This tradition about Socrates presumably derives from the literary type of the *Sokratikos logos* – as Breitenbach⁵ defined it –, that shows the predominance of fiction sets above the very history⁶. Consequently, Socrates, as depicted in these writings, is not a real personage as much as a pattern of thinking and behaviour.

This literary tradition – almost entirely lost – had truly a great influence in the configuration of Socratic writings by Xenophon⁷, who, anyway, it is essential to attribute, at least partially, originality – typical of these works – in choosing the most suitable interpretation of Socrates' thought from youthful memories, and catching the nuances of the relationship with his master. We are particularly interested to remark that Xenophontean *corpus* of writings – including *Oeconomicus*, *Memorabilia*, *Apology of Socrates* and *Symposium*, that are our benchmarks –, play a relevant role in the history of the Socratic genre, insomuch as its goal is to deliver to future generations an imperishable memory of the philosopher⁸.

⁵ In other words, we deal with prose texts halfway between literary picture and genuine description, in which it would have gathered Ionian philosophical tradition, dialectic method, and subjects of popular wisdom (see BREITENBACH 1967, col. 1772). However, since Aristotle (*Poet.* 1447 a) alludes to *Sokratikos logos* as a mimetic genre (οὐδὲν γὰρ ἂν ἔχοιμεν ὀνομάσαι κοινὸν τοῦς Σώφρονος καὶ Ξενάρχου μίμους καὶ τοῦς Σωκρατικούς λόγους οὐδὲ εἴ τις διὰ τριμέτρων ἢ ἐλεγείων ἢ τῶν ἄλλων τινῶν τῶν τοιούτων ποιῶτο τὴν μίμησιν), some scholars insist on the link between the origin of the Socratic dialogue and the dramatic genres: for instance, CLAY 1994, 47, asserts “Plato’s *Sokratikoi logoi* are Attic mimes and that Plato, like his Sicilian master, Sophron, is an *ethopoios*”.

⁶ On the fictional characterization of Socratic literature in Xenophon, see KAHN 1996, 29-35.

⁷ Cfr. LUCCIONI 1953, 112: “Xénophon [...] a composé deux ouvrages qui sont véritablement des λόγοι σοκρατικοί, l’*Économique* et le *Banquet*”.

⁸ We should also add the value of the *gnomai* and *apophthegmata* in the rise of the artistic prose. In this context, the Xenophontean evidence is essential to understand the change from a long tradition of treatises to new framework of conversational prose. In the *Memorabilia* (cfr. GRAY 1998, 159-177, ch. IX, “The tradition of instructional literature”), as in the tradition of tales of wise men in the *Hiero* (cfr. GRAY 1986, 115-123), and besides in the *Symposium*, the Socratic meeting stemmed from “the adaptation, development and transformation of a wider collection of stories about what the wise men of old said and did at their symposia” (GRAY 1992, 74). In this respect, in his analysis of “The Symposia of the *Cyropaedia*”, GERA 1993, 132-91, makes clear the broad knowledge of the literary *simpo-*

2. Xenophon and Plato at *Symposium*

In a survey of Xenophontean *Symposium*⁹, an allusion to Plato is unavoidable; both for the common title and for the examination of Love as main subject, some scholars thought that this dialogue are derived from the philosopher's homonym work¹⁰; although a more precise approach to the content excludes a direct subordination to it (otherwise unusual in Xenophon). The common matter takes place with a different purpose: even if the *logos erotikos* of Socrates in ch. 8 focuses also on pederasty, the text of Xenophon provides an opposite perspective, putting "the spiritual Love" versus "the fleshly Love", besides less philosophical depth.

2.1. The meeting is arranged by the rich man Callias to celebrate the victory of his *eromenos* Autolykus in the fight of pancratius at the Panathenaic Games. The dialogue is a literary fiction, in spite of it's based on a real event (Autolykus, son of Lycon, really won at the Games in 422 BC) that Xenophon uses to give truthfulness to the story and to strengthen his own role as a witness (a literary device reminding the third person fictitious narration of the *Anabasis*):

sium on the part of Xenophon, who fits it to the Persian world. See as well NOËL 2006, 144, who pays special attention to the symposium organized by Cyrus after his victory on the Assyrian king (cfr. VIII, 4), that, in his conclusion, "représente l'idéal politique achevé qu'est l'empire de Cyrus".

⁹ The *Apology of Socrates* is another common title for both authors' writings. Nonetheless, the Xenophontean argumentation with regard to Plato's work suggests the hypothetical existence of an apologetic literature on the trial of Socrates, as a consequence of the commotion of most of his followers because of his condemn (also Antisthenes and Aeschines would have written their respective *Apology*). Cfr. NICKEL 1979, 105-106, and RANKIN 1986, 6-7.

¹⁰ Thus, THESLEFF 1978, 155-170, sees a connection between these two works: "So the hypothesis is, in short, that our present text of Xenophon's *Symposium* consists of two layers: a brief earlier version from the 380s which gave some impulses to Plato's *Symposium*, and a later version (including chapter 8), influenced by Plato and written in the later 370s". Also DANZIG 2005, 331, in a deep review of the relationship between both authors agrees with Plato's preeminence. In spite of all that, we don't observe any quotation or indirect reference of any relation (personal or literary) between Xenophon and Plato.

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Ἄλλ' ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ τῶν καλῶν κάγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν ἔργα οὐ μόνον τὰ μετὰ σπουδῆς πραττόμενα ἀξιομνημόνευτα εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἐν ταῖς παιδιαῖς. οἷς δὲ παραγενόμενος ταῦτα γινώσκω δηλῶσαι βούλομαι. (*Symp.* 1, 1).

The unstrained atmosphere of the symposium displays a permanent search of Socratic philosophy through literary experiments: in particular the ideal of τῶν καλῶν κάγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν.

2.2. Just as in Plato's *Symposium* – and, five centuries later, in Plutarch's *Dinner of Seven Wise Men*¹¹ –, the leitmotif of fortuitous meeting is repeated; the invitation of Callias to a dinner to celebrate the victory of Autolycus gives rise to the meeting between Socrates and his followers. As a matter of fact, Love becomes also the story line, though in Xenophon is presented together with discussions on other subjects. Instead of Plato's discussion on the theory of Ideas, here Love is another literary way to represent the perfect man, καλὸς κάγαθός¹². The structure of the dialogue is based on the search for this ideal:

- Preface (ch. 1): the invitation of Callias and the dinner; the beauty of young Autolycus charms the *symptomai*, but the arrival of Philippus, the drunk jester, provokes his fellow guests laughter and dissolves the erotic charm¹³.
- First part (ch. 2)¹⁴: discussions on several topics irregularly follow each other; the previous appearance of Philippus justifies the debate about moderation in wine drinking.

¹¹ According to MUSTI 2001, 89, it is clear that Socratists looked out for a social practice existing before them, but *symposia* provided them a privileged place for communication of philosophical thinking. Thereupon MARTIN 1931, 259, n. 2, traces in Xenophon stages of real symposium setting the tone of the dialogues

¹² Socrates' influence is reflected in an idealized view of the homosexual Love. According to FLACELIÈRE 1961, 105, from Xenophon's perspective Socrates does not condemn Love between men and young people, "mais la condition essentielle est que cette amitié, qu'on appelle φιλία ou ἔρωσ, reste absolument pure." See also MUSTI 2001, 88: "L'omoerotismo è comunque già deviato e 'sublimato' verso la spiritualità".

¹³ For further information, see commentaries of HUSS 1999, 61-118.

¹⁴ HUSS 1999, 118, discerns five parts in this chapter: "Diese Gliederung zeigt eine straffe Planung der Erzählstruktur, doch tritt für den unbefangenen Leser das planerische Element hinter der scheinbar lockeren Gesprächsführung völlig zurück; die Dialoge sind,

- Second part (ch. 3-7): afterwards each *symplotes* stresses his best quality (ch. 3-4), a comic dispute on the Beauty broke out (ch. 5); the rudeness of the Syracusan impresario¹⁵ – arrived at the dinner with a troupe of actors (ch. 6) – introduces the theme of the right education, which allows Xenophon to defend Socrates against the attacks of the comic play writers (in particular, Aristophanes, *Clouds* 144-152 and 830-831); actors' performance is developed in ch. 7.

- Third part (ch. 8): Socrates' speech about Love, in which the spiritual prevails over the fleshy Love (§ 10)¹⁶, because only the first provides *kalokagathia*, both for the *erastes* and the *eromenos*. In our opinion, this episode is the deeper part of the dialogue, discloses Xenophontean target: probably more than an answer to Plato's *Symposium*¹⁷, Callias' love for Autolykus stands for an example of Socratic pattern¹⁸; nonetheless, in this sense,

ganz wie in der alltäglichen Gesprächssituation, geschickt über Assoziationen miteinander verknüpft"; see besides 118-174.

¹⁵ HUSS 1999, 332, notes that in ch. 6 "So malt Xenophon seinen Sokrates als den sympotischen καλός κάγαθός *par excellence* gegen die Kontrastfiguren Hermogenes und Syrakuser". Cfr. OLLIER 1961, 16.

¹⁶ With regard to Love's dichotomy, HUSS 1999, 374, rightly observes that it is based "natürlich auf der Dichotomie Körper-Seele und auf der grundsätzlichen Höherbewertung des seelischen Bereiches durch die Sokratische Philosophie".

¹⁷ See discussion on this subject in OLLIER 1961, 30-33, THESLEFF 1978, 157-158 (vd. *infra* n. 22), and HUSS 1999, 13-18: in general, they consider Xenophon's *Symposium* later than the Platonic one. DANZIG 2005, 349, suggests that "in reaction he re-wrote the ending of his *Symposium*".

¹⁸ See e.g. 8, 11: ὅφ' οὐδὲ δὴ καὶ σύ, ὦ Καλλία, κατέχεσθαι μοι δοκεῖς ἔρωτος. Τεκμαίρομαι δὲ τῆ τοῦ ἐρωμένου καλοκάγαθια... Most probably in this opinion is stated the main difference in the idea of Love: whereas the Socrates by Plato accepts paederasty (PERCY 1996, 2 sg., claims that Plato included paederasty among the traits that distinguish the noble Greek civilization from that of the barbarians) albeit he focuses on the beauty, on the contrary Xenophon introduces Socrates unambiguously condemning all element of fleshy Love between men; furthermore, our author starts a trend in which symposia do not praise paederasty. Thus, in VELA TEJADA 2009, 465 n. 33, we draw attention to the praise of the heterosexual Love in Plutarch's *Dinner Seven Wise Men*, coinciding with ending of Xenophon's *Symposium*: "Es cierto que ya no cabe, como en aquél, el elogio del amor homosexual como modelo de perfección, pero es que el de Queronea no hace sino seguir algo que ya se había anticipado en la obra homónima de Jenofonte".

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Xenophon's *Symposium* is closer to the Platonic one, particularly with regard to the speeches of Pausanias (180 c-185 c) and the account of Socrates discussion with Diotima, the enigmatic woman of Mantinea (201 d-212 a). However, the difference between the two types of Love presented by Xenophontean Socrates is more similar to Pausanias' speech by Plato, than to that of Socrates himself.

- Conclusion (ch. 9): when the Syracusan impresario calls his actors to play the love story of Dionysos and Ariadne¹⁹, Autolycus leaves the party with his father. This pantomime makes the spectators feel desire and leave the symposium to meet their wives; thus Xenophon seizes the moment to praise marriage and heterosexual Love²⁰ instead of the homosexual one, that instead was considered by Plato the most perfect Love (cfr. 9, 7):

τέλος δὲ οἱ συμπόται ἰδόντες περιβεβληκότας τε ἀλλήλους καὶ ὡς εἰς εὐνὴν ἀπιόντας, οἱ μὲν ἄγαμοι γαμεῖν ἐπώμνυσαν, οἱ δὲ γεγαμηκότες ἀναβάντες ἐπὶ τοὺς ἵππους ἀπήλαυον πρὸς τὰς ἑαυτῶν γυναῖκας, ὅπως τούτων τύχοιεν.

2.3. At this point, bearing in mind the intertextual references in both texts, we ought to dwell upon the connections with the work of Plato²¹. According to some scholars²², we can locate thirty evidences which would make clear Xenophon's dependence on Plato; for instance, in ch. 1, 10, displaying Callias as initiated in the mysteries of Eros: ἂ δὴ καὶ Καλλίας τότε

¹⁹ According to FLACELIÈRE 1961, 97, "la pantomime finale d'Ariadne et Dionysos, qui éveille les désirs amoureux des convives, nous confirme dans l'idée que l'amour est bien le sujet essentiel de cette œuvre, qui pourrait parfaitement porter le même sous-titre que celle de Platon: Περὶ ἔρωτος ἠθικός".

²⁰ For further information see HUSS 1999, 438: "Dies ist der Sokratischen Literatur nicht allgemein eigen, sondern Xenophons eigene Konzeption und ist im Kontext von Xenophons traditionell und heterosexuell ausgerichtetem Familien- und Ehesinn zu sehen".

²¹ For instance, LUCCIONI 1953, 121, notes in Xenophon "une habitude" to imitate Plato.

²² See THESLEFF 1978, 159-163; in 168, he considers Xenophon should have written his *Symposium* before Plato and in two stages: "a brief version from the 380s which gave some impulses to Plato's *Symposium*, and a later version (including chapter 8), influenced by Plato and written in the later 370s". As a matter of fact, Thesleff believes that ch. 8 was constituted by ideas taken from Plato and designed as a counterpart to the speech of Socrates-Diotima.

διὰ τὸν ἔρωτα πράττων ἀξιοθέατος ἦν τοῖς τετελεσμένοις τούτῳ τῷ θεῷ²³. In Plato's *Symposium*, Socrates is the pupil and the woman of Mantinea reveals to him a detailed description of the initiation to rites of Love indeed (209 e-212 a)²⁴.

Nevertheless, the most important reports are shown up in ch. 8, that presents a most explicit erotic tone; thus, in § 31, Socrates denies any homoerotic relation between Achilles and Patroclus: ἀλλὰ μὴν, ὦ Νικήρατε, καὶ Ἀχιλλεὺς Ὀμήρῳ πεποίηται οὐχ ὡς παιδικοῖς Πατρόκλῳ ἀλλ' ὡς ἐ-

²³ This is precisely the central argument of the dialogue between Socrates and Diotima narrated in Plato's *Symposium*; DOVER 1981, 154, titled this episode "progress towards the comprehension of Beauty" (cfr. remarks in 154-160). In fact, we can distinguish six steps towards an initiation in the mysteries of Love: τὰ δὲ τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά (210 a); the first step (210 a) is addressed to the beautiful bodies (δεῖ γάρ, ἔφη, τὸν ὀρθῶς ἰόντα ἐπὶ τοῦτο τὸ πρῶγμα ἄρχεσθαι μὲν νέον ὄντα ἰέναι ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ σώματα); the second one (210 b) requires to appreciate the Beauty of the souls rather than that of the bodies (μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα τὸ ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς κάλλος τιμιώτερον ἠγήσασθαι τοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι) and to observe (210 c) the Beauty existing in the right behaviour (θεάσασθαι τὸ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ τοῖς νόμοις καλόν); and the third (210 c-d), μετὰ δὲ τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα, carry us to τὰς ἐπιστήμας and διανοήματα ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ; in the fourth step (210 e), Plato sums up the previous steps and announces the final guerdon consisting in the "contemplation of unchanging, imperishable Beauty itself, beside which beauties manifested in particulars are worth of little" (DOVER 1981, 156): ὃς γὰρ ἂν μέχρι ἐνταῦθα πρὸς τὰ ἐρωτικά παιδαγωγηθῆ, θεώμενος ἐφεξῆς τε καὶ ὀρθῶς τὰ καλά, πρὸς τέλος ἤδη ἰὼν τῶν ἐρωτικῶν ἐξαιφνης κατόψεταί τι θαυμαστὸν τὴν φύσιν καλόν; the homosexual Love – fifth step (211 b) – is the means to reach that objective (ὅταν δὴ τις ἀπὸ τῶνδε διὰ τὸ ὀρθῶς παιδεραστέῖν ἐπανιών ἐκεῖνο τὸ καλὸν ἄρχηται καθορᾶν, σχεδὸν ἂν τι ἄπτοιο τοῦ τέλους), and this very Love (211c) leads us to the perfect Beauty (γινῶ αὐτὸ τελευτῶν ὃ ἔστι καλόν). The man who passes through all these steps achieves in the end the true ἀρετή (212 a): ἢ οὐκ ἐνθυμῆ, ἔφη, ὅτι ἐνταῦθα αὐτῷ μοναχοῦ γενήσεται, ὀρῶντι ᾧ ὀρατὸν τὸ καλόν, τίκτειν οὐκ εἰδῶλα ἀρετῆς, ἅτε οὐκ εἰδῶλου ἐφαπτομένῳ, ἀλλὰ ἀληθῆ, ἅτε τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἐφαπτομένῳ· τεκόντι δὲ ἀρετὴν ἀληθῆ καὶ θρεψαμένῳ ὑπάρχει θεοφιλεῖ γενέσθαι, καὶ εἴπερ τῷ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπων ἀθανάτῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ; See also MORAVCSIK 1971, 285-302 and, above all, the exhaustive commentary of SIER 1997, 91-291, "Das Wirken des Eros".

²⁴ Socrates seeks to introduce himself like an ignorant who would learn from others; e.g. the well-known Socratic modesty ("Ἐν οἶδα ὅτι οὐδὲν οἶδα). See also DOVER 1980, 155.

ταίρω ἀποθανόντι ἐκπρεπέστατα τιμωρήσαι; also in Plato (180 a) Phaedrus criticizes Aeschylus²⁵, for his innovative the version of the myth in which Achilles falls in love with Patroclus: Αἰσχύλος δὲ φλυαρεῖ φάσκων Ἀχιλλεῖα Πατρόκλου ἐρᾶν,...

Just afterwards, in § 32, Pausanias – the lover of the poet Agathon (in 192 b, also Plato reports their paederastic relationship) – declares that the bravest army could be constituted just by couples composed of lovers and beloved²⁶: καίτοι Πausανίας γε ὁ Ἀγάθωνος τοῦ ποιητοῦ ἐραστής ἀπολογούμενος ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀκρασία ἐγκαλινδουμένων εἶρηκεν ὡς καὶ στρατεύμα ἀλκιμώτατον ἂν γένοιτο ἐκ παιδικῶν τε καὶ ἐραστῶν.

In § 34, Xenophon agrees with Plato²⁷, when attributes to Pausanias the information on the tolerance of pederasty of Thebans²⁸ and Eleans: καὶ μαρ-

²⁵ Aeschylus wrote a trilogy (*Myrmidones, Nereids, Phrygians*), in which presented a paederastic relationship between Achilles and Patroclus; for instance, in *Myrmidones* (fr. 228) he refers explicitly to kisses and thighs (DOVER 1980, 94, annotates that Aeschylus “often modified tradition drastically to suit the attitudes and interests of this own time, and may have been the first to make Achilles the erastes of Patroclus”). For further information see bibliographical discussion in HUSS 1999, 413-414.

²⁶ Plato (178 e) insinuates, in the words of Phaedrus, the suggestion of an army formed by *erastai* and *eromenoi*: εἰ οὖν μηχανή τις γένοιτο ὥστε πόλιν γενέσθαι ἢ στρατόπεδον ἐραστῶν τε καὶ παιδικῶν [...]. This story of an army of *erastai* and *eromenoi* serves LASSERRE 1944, 174, to assert “c’est un indice très sûr de l’existence de ce thème dans une littérature érotique contemporaine de la jeunesse de Phèdre, celle des ἐρωτικοὶ λόγοι”.

²⁷ As a matter of fact, also Plato express himself in similar terms: ἐν Ἥλιδι μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἐν Βοιωτοῖς, καὶ οὐ μὴ σοφοὶ λέγειν, ἀπλῶς νενομοθέτηται καλὸν τὸ χαρίζεσθαι ἐρασταῖς, καὶ οὐκ ἂν τις εἶποι οὔτε νέος οὔτε παλαιός ὡς αἰσχρόν, ἵνα οἶμαι μὴ πράγματ’ ἔχωσιν λόγῳ πειρώμενοι πείθειν τοὺς νέους, ἅτε ἀδύνατοι λέγειν· (182 b); according to DOVER 1980, 99, this reference refutes the common opinion postulating a Dorian origin of homosexuality in Ancient Greece. Likewise, in *The Republic of the Lacedaemonians* (2, 12) Xenophon alludes to paederasty among Thebans and Eleans to stand comparison with the Lacedaemonians: οἱ μὲν τοίνυν ἄλλοι Ἕλληνας ἢ ὥσπερ Βοιωτοὶ ἀνὴρ καὶ παῖς συζυγέντες ὁμιλοῦσιν, ἢ ὥσπερ Ἡλεῖοι διὰ χαρίτων τῇ ὄρα χρῶνται· εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ οἱ παντάπασι τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι τοὺς ἐραστάς εἴργουσιν ἀπὸ τῶν παιδῶν; afterwards, he adds Lycurgus praised the spiritual Love: καλλίστην παιδείαν ταύτην ἐνόμιζεν (2, 13). Therefore, HUSS 1999, 374, observes that “in der Verbindung dieser Dichotomie [ἔρωσ τῆς

τύρια δὲ ἐπήγετο ὡς ταῦτα ἐγνωκότες εἶεν καὶ Θηβαῖοι καὶ Ἡλείοι· συγκαθεύδοντας γοῦν αὐτοῖς ὁμῶς παρατάττεσθαι ἔφη τὰ παιδικὰ εἰς τὸν ἀγῶνα, οὐδὲν τοῦτο σημεῖον λέγων ὅμοιον.

Undoubtedly, the significant resemblances observed in ch. 8 could be explained by the direct reading of Plato's *Symposium*²⁹, but also by a parallel treatment of a same subject in the frame of *logos Sokraticos*. Therefore, we could think to a common entailment of a literary tradition³⁰ inspired by the master Socrates, that is rooted in the previous poetic and social context of the symposium, in which the erotic topics were especially suitable; besides in prose, above all in the setting of *logos Sokraticos*, a discussion on Love is well attested in Plato's *Phaedrus*, and it could have been the argument of Aeschines' *Callias* as well. These evidences would confirm the hypothesis of a common influence from a literary tradition, more than a direct dependence between works and authors; even if we accepted some influence between the two *Symposia*, at the same time we think this should have been indirect.

ψυχῆς vs. ἔρωτος τοῦ σώματος] mit dem Gedanken der παιδεία durch ἔρωτος gewissermassen eine *summa* des gesamten *Logos Erotikos* des Sokrates geboten wird".

²⁸ On Thebes as "the legendary font of Greek paederasty", see PERCY 1996, 133; later (in 185), he stresses the richness of documents attesting the importance of paederasty and paederasty for Greek civilization: actually unimpeachable authorities bear out that the Greek society not only accepted paederasty but also deemed it as a worthy path to intellectual and military distinction.

²⁹ Vd. e.g. DANZIG 2005, 357.

³⁰ Thereon, LASSERRE 1944, 177, believe in a lost tradition of *Ἐρωτικοὶ Λόγοι* "qui auront tant de vogue dès le IV^e siècle sont nés comme tant d'autres nouveaux genres dans cette époque si féconde qu'est la fin du Ve siècle et que c'est d'eux que vient un certain nombre des éléments des plus admirables mythes que Platon a élaborés dans ces œuvres maîtresses que sont le *Banquet* et le *Phèdre*". Likewise, ROSSETTI 1974, 187, declares: "Man kann nämlich zuerst bemerken, dass der Bezug Plutarchs auf Platon, Xenophon und Aischines absolut treffend, genau und sachgemäss ist; Antisthenes, Aristipp und Phaidon werden mit Recht aus der Reihe derjenigen ausgeschlossen, die *erotikoi logoi* schrieben". See also NICKEL 1979, 105, and KAHN 1996, 1-29.

3. Xenophon's contribution to the *Symposium*

Certainly Xenophon tries to depict³¹ a more realistic atmosphere³² than Plato; the dialogues are nimble, flowing, and absolutely natural, and the characters are very well formed. The teacher Socrates is presented as the unifying element of all the other characters: the pedant Callias, the rough Antisthenes, the grave Hermogenes, the humorous Philippus. Actually the figure of Socrates is adjusted to dialogue and to interlocutors: sometimes he is serious, at times burlesque. Otherwise, the choice of characters is outstanding.

- Callias, the host, came from a rich Athenian family, and squandered an enormous fortune, left him by his father, Hipponicus, in hiring sophists (Xenophon omits here his economic ruin). His mother, married Hipponicus after divorced from Pericles, and was already mother of Paralus. His sister, Hippareta, was wedded to Alcibiades. Also in the Platonic *Protagoras*, the meeting takes place in the house of Callias himself.

- The teacher Socrates attends to the symposium with his disciples, whose names are well documented in other works of Xenophon: Critobulus, Crito's son (see *Memorabilia* I, 3, 8; II, 6, 1), Hermogenes (see *Memorabilia* I, 2, 48; II, 10, 43; IV, 8, 4; *Apology of Socrates* 2), Antisthenes (see *Memorabilia* II, 5, 1; III, 11, 17), and Charmides (see *Memorabilia* III, 6, 1; III, 7, 1).

- The *deuteragonistai* are also important: both Philippus, the jester of the Hellenistic Comedy (this was probably a customary guest in those meetings), and the Syracusan impresario (who plays performances for *sympotai*) help to the verisimilitude of this literary encounter.

- Moreover, Xanthippe³³, Socrates' second wife, is still present, and her bad temper is usually mocked by the disciples of the master. Thus, in ch.

³¹ GERA 1993, 136, notices that themes and motives of the symposia are present in the *Symposium* as in *Cyropaedia*, observing how Xenophon "describes in detail the events leading up to the party, the setting of the symposium, its seating arrangements, and entertainments [...]. The reactions, expressions, and thoughts of the symposiasts are also frequently mentioned".

³² Thus, LUCCIONI 1953, 123, comments that we may "ressusciter pour le lecteur l'atmosphère de ces sortes de réunions» by Xenophon's *Symposium*. See also HUSS 1999, 51-55.

³³ Whereas in *Memorabilia* II, 2, Xenophon introduces Xanthippe as a perfect mother, here the author follows a negative version, which HUSS 1999, 139, attributes to the Cyn-

2, 10, Antisthenes says: καὶ ὁ Ἀντισθένης, Πῶς οὖν, ἔφη, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὕτω γινώσκων οὐ καὶ σὺ παιδεύεις Ξανθίππην, ἀλλὰ χρῆ γυναικὶ τῶν οὐσῶν, οἶμαι δὲ καὶ τῶν γεγενημένων καὶ τῶν ἐσομένων χαλεπωτάτη; Ὅτι, ἔφη, ὁρῶ καὶ τοὺς ἵππικοὺς βουλομένους γενέσθαι οὐ τοὺς εὐπειθεστάτους ἀλλὰ τοὺς θυμοειδεῖς ἵππους κτωμένους. νομίζουσι γάρ, ἂν τοὺς τοιοῦτους δύνωνται κατέχειν, ῥαδίως τοῖς γε ἄλλοις ἵπποις χρήσεσθαι. καὶ γὰρ δὴ βουλόμενος ἀνθρώποις χρήσθαι καὶ ὁμιλεῖν ταύτην κέκτημαι, εὖ εἰδὼς ὅτι εἰ ταύτην ὑπόισω, ῥαδίως τοῖς γε ἄλλοις ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις συνέσομαι.

In sum, the keen realism of the Xenophontean version seems to seek out the most genuine picture of Socrates. For this reason, Xenophon's dialogue diverges from the theoretical analyses stated by interlocutors in Platonic works, and it is adjusted to a really informal and amusing meeting among the teacher and his disciples. Therefore, seriousness and humour clash to the strengthening of the realism of scenes and of the naturalness in discussions³⁴. In fact, the Xenophontean Socrates, who laughs, drinks, and watches with admiration erotic performances, is very different not only from the character restored by Plato, but also from the serious personality showed in *Oeconomicus* and *Memorabilia* by Xenophon himself. Otherwise, the amusing figure and the variety of the subjects in the Xenophontean *Symposium* could be closer to the Socratic tradition. Contrary to the bizarre description by Aristophanes and the enhanced and grave one by Plato, Xenophon does not aim at describing Socrates as an extraordinary man, but as an accessible teacher for all those who wish to follow his guide.

Actually, as most scholars have observed, the works about Socrates by Xenophon generally display a trivial opinion and do not show a deep critical

ics, who created "der Xanthippe als Gegenfigur zum stets überlegenen Sokrates benutzt; bedeutsam also, dass es Antisthenes ist, der an unserer Stelle negativ über Xanthippe urteilt". Hence, RANKIN 1986, 15-16, considers this passage as an important evidence for the acquaintance of Antisthenes.

³⁴ The combination of a serious tone and humour is the really characteristic atmosphere of Xenophontean symposium (cfr. MARTIN, 1931, 1-32); thus, GERA, 1993, 136, identifies the *σπουδαιογέλοιστον* as the main feature of the genre, "in fact, particularly associated with Socratic symposia in ancient times".

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spirit³⁵. His thinking lies next to a well-educated man who defends virtue and moral values of his time rather than to a philosopher; in any case, the role of these Socratic works as evidence of a literary tradition on the life of a wise man and on the practical wisdom too is undeniable, and usually not found in works devoted only to philosophical discussion. At this point, we want to underline the notable variety of the literary forms, since this enlightens us about the literary tendencies of the first half of 4th century BC, in advance on prose types of the next decades³⁶. For instance, Pliny the Young asserts in a *Letter* (III, 12, 1) that he would prefer to attend just to a symposium as the one described by Xenophon; likewise, the Emperor Julian writes another satirical symposium, the *Caesars*, inspired by the same author.

With regard to this, we should stress again³⁷ Xenophon's contribution in adaptation and growth of a wide collection of narrations on the figure of Socrates in literary context, so that he could be considered a precursor and framer of new Hellenistic genres; for example, in the mime between Dionysus and Ariadne: the performance of this piece belongs to the symposiac setting and, at the same time, turns out a perfect ending to the plot (9, 6-7):

ἔωκεσαν γὰρ οὐ δεδιδαγμένοις τὰ σχήματα ἀλλ' ἐφειμένοις πράττειν ἂ πάλαι ἐπεθύμουν. (7) τέλος δὲ οἱ συμπόται ἰδόντες περιβεβληκότας τε ἀλλήλους καὶ ὡς εἰς εὐνήν ἀπιόντας, οἱ μὲν ἄγαμοι γαμεῖν ἐπάμνυσαν, οἱ δὲ γεγαμηκότες ἀναβάντες ἐπὶ τοὺς ἵππους ἀπήλαυνον πρὸς τὰς

³⁵ See *supra* n. 2. On the contrary, FLACELIÈRE 1961, 93, thinks the *Symposium* full of interest: “je ne suis pas loin de penser que le *Banquet* est, avec l'*Anabase*, l'un de ses meilleures ouvrages”.

³⁶ Five centuries later this literary form is carried on by Plutarch in his *Dinner of Seven Wise Men*, a work which undoubtedly resembles more the historian's dialogue than the philosopher's one. In VELA TEJADA 2009, 467-468, we study in detail the continuity of the symposiac tradition, with predominance of practical wisdom attested by Xenophon: “El diálogo simposiaco, desde la tradición socrática, reemplaza a la poesía como marco sapiencial y cada autor adopta libremente los temas de discusión, lo que explica las lógicas “desviaciones” del referente de Platón. Por otra parte, la introducción de temas de carácter práctico y la preeminencia del *eros* heterosexual y conyugal – frente al homoerotismo platónico – está perfectamente atestiguado desde los comienzos del género en prosa en la obra de Jenofonte”.

³⁷ According to GRAY 1992, 74, in this work Xenophon uses “the tradition of the story of the silent guest at the *symposion* in order to contribute to the biography of Socrates and the understanding of the special kind of wisdom he displayed”.

ἐαυτῶν γυναῖκας, ὅπως τούτων τύχοιεν. Σωκράτης δὲ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων οἱ ὑπομείναντες πρὸς Λύκωνα καὶ τὸν υἱὸν σὺν Καλλίᾳ περιπατήσοντες ἀπήλθον. αὕτη τοῦ τότε συμποσίου κατάλυσις ἐγένετο.

4. *Eros, paideia* and Socratism in Xenophon's *Symposium*

Henceforth, once deemed Xenophon's originality in the composition of *Symposium*, we have to formulate a final conclusion about our perception of the ἀρχή that inspired him in writing this dialogue³⁸. Although we have examined some passages from the homonym work of Plato, we naturally mean that in this case Xenophon should be read, as happen for other works, in the general frame of his literary activity. Thereon, we support the theory of the use of a common subject in the Socratic tradition, which, overarching his entire work, is focused on the pedagogic outlook of Socrates.

Xenophon essentially shares, with the authors of his generation, a pedagogic³⁹ spirit that follows the intellectual guide of Socrates⁴⁰. His thought is expressed more systematically through a new literary experiment: these writings provide a bent to update literary instruction by inserting Socratic

³⁸ With regard to this perspective, we agree with GRAY 1998, 25, who points out that the question "is not whether Xenophon was capable of understanding Socratic process or doctrine, but why he chooses to present it as he does". In this respect, in a study on the Socrates as a "Master of Erotics" by Xenophon, MORRISON 1994, 198, notes that in Xenophontean *Symposium* "Socrates presents a version of this claim that connects it directly with education". Moreover it is not surprising to be aware that Socrates claiming to have expert knowledge of erotics, as Plato, *Symp.* 177 d, echoes: οὐδέν φημι ἄλλο ἐπίστασθαι ἢ τὰ ἐρωτικά.

³⁹ POWNALL 2007, 241-250, includes Xenophon, with Isocrates and Plato, in the group of the fourth-century prose writers devote, in their works, to the moral education of an audience usually composed by a literate and educated elite.

⁴⁰ This was exactly our proposal in VELA TEJADA 2003, 461: in this study we also perceived in Xenophon's treatises the stamp of the Socratic thought, systematized in a new literary experiment. Xenophon, modernizing the tradition of literary instruction by means of the introduction of Socratic thinking, re-elaborates material from other writings and with a different thematic aim in a original literary form. This tradition is summarized in the search of the individual paradigm and in the pedagogic proposal.

thoughts. With this framework, Xenophon thinks back over material founded in other writings with a different target.

Accordingly, in the variety of subjects apparently treated without connection by the *sympotai*, he underlines the body of Socratic doctrines on *paideia*, whose aim at the achievement of human ἀρετή, through the καλοκαγαθία, which Socrates is the incarnation. In relation to that, we can remember, e.g., that in the *Spartan Constitution* (2, 12-13) Xenophon says: Λεκτέον δέ μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι καὶ περὶ τῶν παιδικῶν ἐρώτων· ἔστι γὰρ τι καὶ τοῦτο πρὸς παιδείαν⁴¹. Since it is patent that Love is a basic subject in the education of young men, a work like the *Symposium* seems the most suitable for his educational purpose⁴².

Moreover, Xenophon's pedagogical aim is fitted inside the contemporary debate on the best model of education, in which Spartan ἀγωγή and Athenian παιδεία are strongly opposed. Therefore, is clear that the dialogue becomes a sort of collection of sources referred to Athenian education of 5th century BC.

- First of all, we should underline some direct and indirect quotations from Homer (*Il.* IV, 6-7; 20; 45; VIII, 30), who sets up an authentic *hypomnema* of Greek popular wisdom. Thus, one of the *sympotai*, Niceratus (the son of general Nicias, killed by the Thirty), is recognized by Socrates in ch. 8.31 as an authority in Homer: he is able to recite by heart two complete poems (cfr. 3, 5); in ch. 3, 6, Stesimbrotus and Anaximander are quoted as exegetes of Homer.

- Even Poetry becomes a mean of transmission of *paideia*. From Archaic Age on, it had been also the natural frame in symposiac literature, pre-

⁴¹ In relation to that, vd. *supra* n. 28, where it is commented Xenophon's mention of paederasty among Thebans and Eleans in comparison with Lacedemonians, about which HINDLEY 2004, 143, says: "Xenophon presents a possible model for paederastic relationships, a model which stood in opposition (and, one might venture to think, in conscious opposition) to the homosexual celibacy propounded by Socrates."

⁴² NOEL 2006, 133, points out the symposia also play an outstanding role in the political debate of the 5th and 4th centuries BC: "n'est pas seulement l'expression d'une pratique sociale, mais aussi la représentation des idéaux politiques de la cité"; the last decades of 5th century and the first of 4th became indeed years of the maturity in philosophical consideration of this social practice. Nonetheless, MARTIN, 1931, 124, diminishes the influence of Socrates, who mainly "provides a sort of endpoint".

cisely up to the time when writers like Xenophon and Plato brought the symposium as setting for prose. Thus, in ch. 2, 4, is quoted the Theognis' elegy to Cyrnos (1, 35-36). In this work occurs another poetic genre, the Theatre, became the main tool for education in Athens in the 5th Century BC: Aristophanes' *Clouds* (144) in ch. 6, 8 (in ch. 4, 8 it is also reported an anecdote about the onion, extracted from *Thesmophoriazusa*, 492). An indirect reference to Tragedy (Aeschylus' *Myrmidones*) is given in ch. 8, 31, where it is denied the pederasty between Achilles and Patroclus⁴³; eventually, he alludes to the famous actor Nicostratus (ch. 6, 3-4), as well as to Satyr plays (ch. 4, 19).

• In this context of education, however, we could not neglect to mention the Sophists, with whom Socrates and his disciples bitterly disputed the moral leadership in the education of young men⁴⁴; thereby, in ch. 1, 5, Xenophon openly censures them for enrichment through teaching, and quotes Protagoras, Gorgias (again in ch. 2, 26) and Prodicus:

καὶ ὁ Σωκράτης εἶπεν· Ἄεὶ σὺ ἐπισκώπτεις ἡμᾶς καταφρονῶν, ὅτι σὺ μὲν Πρωταγόρα τε πολὺ ἀργύριον δέδωκας ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ καὶ Γοργίᾳ καὶ Προδικῷ καὶ ἄλλοις πολλοῖς, ἡμᾶς δ' ὄρας αὐτουργοῦς τινας τῆς φιλοσοφίας ὄντας.

By facing the avarice of the sophists, Xenophon praises the generosity of Socrates in the words of Antisthenes (ch. 4, 43-44):

⁴³ Socrates addresses to Niceratus like an authority on Homer: ἀλλὰ μὴν, ὦ Νικήρατε, καὶ Ἀχιλλεὺς Ομήρω πεποίηται οὐχ ὡς παιδικοῖς Πατρόκλῳ ἀλλ' ὡς ἐταίρῳ ἀποθανόντι ἐκπρεπέστατα τιμωρῆσαι. Sophists were reluctant to acknowledge the great Epic tradition as armature of Greek education (cfr. RANKIN 1986, 175-178). With reference to the topic of pederasty between Achilles and Patroclus, see above n. 25.

⁴⁴ Surely we should insert in this context the severe criticism to the sophists in the epilogue of *Cynegeticus* (ch. 13, 1-9): Θυμάζω δὲ τῶν σοφιστῶν καλουμένων ὅτι φασὶ μὲν ἐπ' ἀρετὴν ἄγειν οἱ πολλοὶ τοὺς νέους, ἄγουσι δ' ἐπὶ τὸναντίον· οὔτε γὰρ [ἄν] ἄνδρα που ἐωράκαμεν ὄντιν' οἱ νῦν σοφισταὶ ἀγαθὸν ἐποίησαν, οὔτε γράμματα παρέχονται ἐξ ὧν χρὴ ἀγαθοὺς γίγνεσθαι, ἀλλὰ περὶ μὲν τῶν ματαίων πολλὰ αὐτοῖς γέγραπται, ἀφ' ὧν τοῖς νέοις αἱ μὲν ἡδοναὶ κεναί, ἀρετὴ δ' οὐκ ἔνι· [...] 13, 9 οἱ μὲν γὰρ σοφισταὶ πλουσίους καὶ νέους θηρῶνται, οἱ δὲ φιλόσοφοι πᾶσι κοινοὶ καὶ φίλοι· τύχας δὲ ἀνδρῶν οὔτε τιμῶσιν οὔτε ἀτιμάζουσι. Some scholars have considered spurious this epilogue for its different content in relation to the rest of the treatise (for discussion see GRAY 1985, 156-172, who supports Xenophon's authority). Also the teaching without stipend is also an argument to vindicate Socrates in *Memorabilia* (1, 2, 7-8).

Σωκράτης τε γὰρ οὗτος παρ' οὗ ἐγὼ τοῦτον ἐκτησάμην οὐτ' ἀριθμῶ οὔτε σταθμῶ ἐπήρκει μοι, ἀλλ' ὅποσον ἐδυνάμην φέρεσθαι, τοσοῦτόν μοι παρεδίδου· ἐγὼ τε νῦν οὐδενὶ φθονῶ, ἀλλὰ πᾶσι τοῖς φίλοις καὶ ἐπιδεικνύω τὴν ἀφθονίαν καὶ μεταδίδωμι τῷ βουλομένῳ τοῦ ἐν τῇ ἐμῇ ψυχῇ πλοῦτου. (44) καὶ μὴν καὶ τὸ ἀβρότατόν γε κτήμα, τὴν σχολὴν ἀεὶ ὄρατέ μοι παροῦσαν, ὥστε καὶ θεᾶσθαι τὰ ἀξιοθέατα καὶ ἀκούειν τὰ ἀξιάκουστα καὶ ὁ πλείστου ἐγὼ τιμῶμαι, Σωκράτει σχολάζων συνδιημερεύειν. καὶ οὗτος δὲ οὐ τοὺς πλείστον ἀριθμοῦντας χρυσίον θαυμάζει, ἀλλ' οἱ ἂν αὐτῷ ἀρέσκωσι τοῦτοις συνῶν διατελεῖ.

5. Conclusion

Summing up, Plato and Xenophon make use of the same frames, the dialogue and the *symposium*, although the minimal resemblances – based on a common tradition which both authors equally follow – make unnecessary any comparison between their works, above all with regard to philosophical and literary quality of each one. For a better understanding of different sides of the Socratic heritage, both *Symposia* are equally necessary, to allow to know the events that surrounded the real man as well as for no other witnesses are available. As a matter of fact, the Socratic dialogues with other interlocutors are useful to introduce the teacher as the ideal of perfect man *καλὸς κἀγαθός*⁴⁵, in contrast with the excesses of the other attendees. In other words, Xenophon tried to convey that Socrates was also exemplary in attending a symposium (the traditional place of meeting of aristocracy and cultivated class). Therefore, we can see a tribute to a figure that shaped the composition of all Xenophontean work rather than a display of thinking by our writer. We mean that Xenophon – perhaps an educator, surely not a philosopher –, did not aim at a speculative but a pedagogic goal.

Jose Vela Tejada
jvela@unizar.es

⁴⁵ WATERFIELD 2004, 98, is right to point out that “the ideal of *kalokagathia* underlies all the Xenophon’s works”. See also ROSCALLA 2004, 115-124, especially 123: “Sulle tracce di *kaloī kagathoi* e della *kalokagathia* sembra dunque d’incontrare un Senofonte diverso da come si è comunemente propensi a considerarlo, in grado di elaborare un progetto politico e culturale differente da quello di Platone.”

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